

In the claims:

Please substitute the following full listing of claims for the claims as originally filed or most recently amended.

1. (Currently Amended) A computer implemented product catalog for use in a web-centric collaborative engineering environment (CEE) for providing an inter-enterprise collaborative mechanism for organizations developing and maintaining complex system products, the CEE providing a federated architecture linking multiple systems and applications together to enable collaboration among enterprise members, comprising:

an object oriented database management system (ODBMS) managing an associative object model ~~(product model)~~ for providing a persistent understanding of product and program information, assets and tools available in the enterprise;

a plurality of part objects forming a product catalog, the part objects being defined by the product associative object model and stored in the ODBMS, wherein each part object has intrinsic characteristics corresponding to a plurality of default values, the product catalog providing an application independent means for supporting engineering tools through intelligent interfaces;

means for generating part references, where a part reference refers to a corresponding part object in the product catalog, and wherein the part reference has characteristics customized for a project that override or extend the intrinsic characteristics of its corresponding part object; and

means for linking members of the enterprise with part objects and customized part references via a collaborative engineering environment (CEE), the CEE having a framework for collaboration which provides access control, security, search mechanisms,

concurrency control, versioning, information structuring, information mapping and exchange, wherein the information available to each member is information necessary for the member to complete role and team based tasks, and wherein the linking means comprises a plurality of tools, each tool communicating information with the ODBMS.

2. (Previously Presented) A system as recited in claim 1, wherein a part object is a collection of one or more part objects.

3. (Previously Presented) A system as recited in claim 1, wherein part objects represent commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) hardware, electrical, software, or intangible or abstract component types.

4. (Previously Presented) A system as recited in claim 1, wherein the product catalog supports part objects representing commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) hardware, electrical, software, and intangible or abstract component types.

5. (Original) A system as recited in claim 1, wherein the product catalog provides a single point of information management with unlimited application by reference.

6. (Original) A system as recited in claim 1, wherein the CEE enables members of the enterprise to capture technology and model information and associate the captured information with a system component for entry into the product catalog.

7. (Original) A system as recited in claim 6, wherein the parts and components in the product catalog are extensible to an existing user community in an enterprise, the user community requiring customization of parts for use in projects associated with the enterprise.

8. (Previously Presented) A system as recited in claim 1, wherein the product catalog provides a single extensible interface for enterprise member information management systems.

9. (Original) A system as recited in claim 1, wherein the product catalog supports part objects representing projected or hypothetical components.

10. (Original) A system as recited in claim 1, wherein intrinsic information of a component, the component being represented by one or more parts in the product catalog, is augmented with implementation specific information.

11. (Previously Presented) A method for customizing a product catalog for use by a project in a collaborative engineering environment (CEE) which provides an inter-enterprise collaborative mechanism for organizations developing and maintaining complex system products, and provides a federated architecture linking multiple systems and applications together to enable collaboration among enterprise members, comprising:

generating a product model for the project, wherein the product model defines project related informational elements and their corresponding characteristics, and wherein the project related informational elements may differ based on domain area;

identifying elements (parts) existing in a enterprise-wide product catalog;

customizing the existing parts for the project, by referring to default characteristics of the existing parts and when desired specifying overriding or extending part characteristics unique to the project;

if necessary to fully implement the project product model, providing new parts for the product catalog; and

integrating the project product model with domain-specific tools and application used by members of the enterprise, thereby enabling collaboration among enterprise members who have immediate access to information stored in the ODBMS by other members, wherein each member performs domain specific tasks using customized tools and applications and stores results of their performed tasks in the ODBMS, thereby allowing access of their information by other members of the enterprise.

12. (Original) A method as recited in claim 11, wherein the product catalog utilized for identifying parts in the identifying step and providing new parts in the providing steps comprises:

an object oriented database management system (ODBMS) managing an associative object model (product model) for providing a persistent understanding of product and program information, assets and tools available in the enterprise;

a plurality of part objects forming a product catalog, the part objects being defined by the product model and stored in the ODBMS, wherein each part object has default characteristics corresponding to a default environment;

means for generating part references, where a part reference refers to a corresponding part object in the product catalog, and wherein the part reference has characteristics customized for a project that override the default characteristics of its corresponding part

object; and

means for linking members of the enterprise with part objects and customized part references via a collaborative engineering environment (CEE), the CEE having a framework for collaboration which provides access control, security, search mechanisms, concurrency control, versioning, information structuring, information mapping and exchange, wherein the information available to each member is information necessary for the member to complete role and team based tasks, and wherein the linking means comprises a plurality of tools, each tool communicating information with the ODBMS.

13. (Original) A method as recited in claim 11, wherein the step of providing new parts, further comprises:

capturing technology and model information by members of the enterprise; and

associating the captured information with a system component for entry into the product catalog.

14. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 13, further comprising:

entering new part objects into the product catalog, wherein the new part objects correspond to system components associated with the captured information in the associating step.

15. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 13, further comprising:

entering updated part object information into the product catalog when captured information results in necessary modification to an existing part and not identification of a new part, wherein the updated part objects correspond to system components associated with the captured information in the associating step.

16. (Original) A method as recited in claim 13, wherein the new or updated part objects are reviewed by at least one member of the enterprise having authority to accept or reject the part objects, and wherein if a new or updated part object is rejected it is not entered into the product catalog, but if a new or updated part object is accepted, it is entered into the product catalog.

17. (Original) A method as recited in claim 16, further comprising notifying members of the enterprise that new parts or part information are available.

18. (Original) A method as recited in claim 17, wherein the step of notifying further comprises automatically updating project specific parts and components with modified part information for updated parts.

19. (Original) A method as recited in claim 11, further comprising:

retrieving part information from the part catalog by members of a project within the enterprise; and  
customizing retrieved part information for use in a project.

20. (Original) A method as recited in claim 19, wherein the step of customizing further comprises:

- maintaining desired default characteristics for retrieved part information;
- overriding default characteristics for retrieved part information, as necessary to represent system components of the project; and
- extending part information with additional part characteristics, as necessary to represent system components of the project, the additional part characteristics being omitted from part information retrieved in the product catalog.